



ParentInfo

News for a child's most important educator

Sept. 5, 2013

Produced by the Kentucky Department of Education

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Graduating high school students show consistent ACT improvement

Kentucky public high school graduates continue to make steady gains on the ACT college entrance exam with more students achieving college-readiness, as defined by state benchmarks. Students have gained nearly one point in English, a half-point in mathematics and a half-point on the composite score since 2009, the first year results included all Kentucky high school juniors as well as public school college-bound seniors.

The graduating class of 2013 registered the highest scores in the past five years, up slightly over the previous year. The composite score increased one-tenth of a point to 19.6 on a 36-point scale.

Scores also went up in English, mathematics and science; reading scores did not change from 2012.

ACT RESULTS - KENTUCKY PUBLIC SCHOOL GRADUATES*

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
English	18.3	18.3	18.7	19.0	19.2
Mathematics	18.7	18.8	18.8	19.1	19.2
Reading	19.4	19.2	19.6	19.8	19.8
Science	19.4	19.2	19.3	19.5	19.7
Composite	19.1	19.0	19.2	19.5	19.6
Number taking test	40,906	41,277	42,196	41,851	41,858

*Includes standard time students only

While Kentucky students trail their counterparts nationally by 1.4 points overall, the percentage of public high school graduates meeting or exceeding the state's college readiness benchmarks is up. The Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) benchmarks are the scores used to determine whether a student is college-ready under the Unbridled Learning Assessment and Accountability System and are the minimum scores that guarantee entry into corresponding credit-bearing college courses without the need for developmental education or supplemental courses.

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Proposed food guidelines stricter than current ones

By Stu Johnson, WEKU News

While new federal school nutrition regulations are scheduled to go into effect this time next year, Sue Bartenfield, child nutrition program manager with the Kentucky Department of Education, said they won't result in monumental changes.

Bartenfield said some of the federal measures are more restrictive than current state law, noting the biggest differences pertain to beverage portion sizes in all grade levels.

Bartenfield said new sodium and calorie limits also are more restrictive than Kentucky's current standards for school food.

Much of the focus is on vending machines.

Bartenfield said state law already prohibits sales during the school day, but federal law would keep vending machines shut down for an extra 30 minutes each day.

"The standards apply to all foods sold until 30 minutes after the end of the school day," she said. "That's more restrictive because ours say until the end of the school day to the last instructional period, so it would just be continued 30 minutes longer," Bartenfield said.

Bartenfield noted that food processors might need to alter their production strategies.

"The food distributors (and) manufacturers are having to readjust their products to meet these criteria, so that's going to be a big impact on the food service industry," Bartenfield said.

College readiness, from Page 1

Percentages of Kentucky public school graduates meeting CPE standards for college readiness

College-level course*	Benchmark	2012 graduates meeting benchmark	2013 graduates meeting benchmark
English	18	56.2%	57%
Mathematics	19	41.6%	43%
Reading	20	46.5%	48%

* CPE has not set a state science benchmark. Includes standard time students only.

This year, ACT updated its college-readiness benchmarks, which differ from CPE benchmarks, based on gradual changes identified through ACT's routine practice of monitoring the predictive validity of the ACT. Students who reach the ACT benchmarks have a 50 percent chance of obtaining a B or higher or about a 75 percent chance of earning a C or higher in the corresponding credit-bearing college course.

College-reportable scores for all students with ACT-approved accommodations were included in the national report this year for the first time. In prior years, scores for students receiving time-extended accommodations were not included in the summary reporting. These two changes in the ACT reports affect the ability to make direct comparison in some areas, mainly in trend data.

Individual school ACT data for the junior class that tested in March 2013 will be released in the School Report Card later this month.



Top chefs: Mayfield team wins new fair event with baked fajita recipe

Mayfield (Independent) High School won the first Farm to School Junior Chef championship recently at the Kentucky State Fair. The competition teaches cooking skills and healthy food choices and raises awareness of the high quality and variety of local foods available in Kentucky. Above, Agriculture Commissioner James Comer poses with winning team members from left, Jade Gowins, Aolani Madera and Morgan Newell after they received their trophy. Fern Creek High (Jefferson County) finished in second place. (Kentucky Department of Agriculture photo by Chris Aldridge)

Close the Deal opens doors for more students who want to be college-ready

Initiative adds four schools to second year of statewide effort

Lt. Gov. Jerry Abramson and state education officials recently joined local, business and education leaders from four Kentucky communities to launch the second round of "Close the Deal," an initiative aimed at challenging high school seniors to pursue additional education after graduation.

Holmes (Covington Independent), Gallatin County, Greenup County and Logan County high schools are the four new schools participating in Close the Deal this year.

"The Close the Deal initiative creates a college-going culture in high schools for students who aren't yet considering higher education," Abramson said. "If we truly want to prepare Kentucky's next generation of leaders for the demands of the 21st-century workforce, we must continue to find ways to encourage and assist our high school students to seek additional education."

Close the Deal is unique because it supports high school counselors and engages the business and postsecondary communities in helping students attain education past high school, Abramson said.

Campbell County, Lawrence County and Bullitt Central (Bullitt County) high schools launched Close the Deal in 2012 with positive results, according to Abramson.

For example, Bullitt Central had a significant increase in students applying and being accepted into college according to Shannon Sellinger, counselor at Bullitt Central. Roughly 94 percent of seniors applied to college, earning almost \$4 million in scholarships, an increase of almost \$1 million from last year, she said. The school also had the largest increase in the state of students who filled out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.



In taking Close the Deal statewide, Abramson formed a partnership with the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) to add the program to the department's Operation Preparation initiative.

Operation Preparation was launched in August 2011 and combines the efforts of the Department of Education and the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet to discuss life after high school with students.

"Close the Deal complements Operation Preparation's mission, which is to encourage partnerships between communities and their schools to ensure that students are ready for college and careers," Education Commissioner Terry Holliday said. "Close the Deal provides students with the information and tools they will need to explore higher education options, raising their comfort levels and knowledge as they prepare for life after high school."

At each Close the Deal launch, seniors will meet with college representatives regarding how to apply for admission and financial aid, while local business leaders will outline the skills needed for current and future opportunities. In addition, students will have an opportunity to meet with representatives from many Kentucky colleges and universities at the event.

The 2013 Close the Deal events will take place in October and early November:

- Holmes High School – Oct. 4
- Gallatin County High School – Oct. 16
- Greenup County High School – Oct. 29
- Logan County High School – Nov. 1

For more information about Close the Deal in Kentucky, visit www.ltgovernor.ky.gov.

The morning matters

Playing games and having meaningful conversations are just a few ways to strengthen a parent-child relationship in the early hours each day

From PTA.org

You know physical activity is good for the body, but did

you know it's also good for the brain? Research shows when children walk at a moderate pace for 20 minutes in the morning before school, they increase their ability to pay attention and concentrate, resulting in higher test scores and academic performance. That's why walking to school or a bus stop is great exercise for kids to do every day.

In addition to strengthening the body and brain, walking to school – or any nearby destination – gives your child something else: time with you. Those moments are critical for emotional and social development.

Three tips to make the most of your walk to school or to the bus stop with your child

- Start with a good breakfast.
- Play a game of "I Spy" or ask your child about a current event.
- Give an expression of love when you get there – a hug, a kiss, a high five or a "Have a great day!"

It's these simple things that can help your child fuel up for the day, learn something new and feel confident of your support and encouragement as they embark on a day of learning.

Would you like to learn more ways to keep your family healthy?

National PTA has some great resources for both your family and your school. Learn more about family health and safety information and school programs at www.pta.org/healthandsafety.



Two Priority Schools recognized as hubs for improvement

Pulaski County, Franklin-Simpson high schools to share best practices

Based on data, monitoring visits and monitoring tools, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) designated Franklin-Simpson High School (Simpson County) and Pulaski County High School as [Hub Schools](#) for their work in improving student learning and building core processes that can sustain the improvement.

As a Hub School, each school will serve as a regional hub of learning for students and adults. The schools will share their best or promising practices with schools in their area of the state to support improvement.

The goals of a Hub School are to:

- create aligned actions steps that are connected to the identified purpose
- create a system that focuses on aligned planning, communication, marketing, effectiveness measures, connections and the target audience
- capture best or promising practices that have yielded results at the Hub School and other Priority Schools within the region to share with others

KDE selected Pulaski County High based on progress made in student learning, superintendent and district level support, excellent understanding of the turnaround process, strong vision of leadership, communication with stakeholders and being a learning-centered school.

Franklin-Simpson High was selected as a Hub School based on significant data improvement, supportive district and school level administrators who have positive attitudes toward students and have many sustainable systems in place along with the ability to efficiently manage multiple initiatives within those established systems and the presence of a strong school leadership team.